

ADDRESS

ORATED BY

Massachusetts Horticultural Society,

ON THE

DEDICATION OF HORTICULTURAL HALL,

MAY 15, 1846.

BY GEORGE LUNT.

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH,

37, CONGRESS STREET.

1846.

1875

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DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,

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No. 37, Congress Street.

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MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,
Boston, May 17th, 1845.

At a meeting of the Society, held this day, it was

Voted, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the HON. GEORGE LUNT, of Newburyport, for the truly poetical and highly classical Address, delivered by him, on the occasion of the dedication of the New Hall of the Association.

Voted, That Messrs. Isaac P. Davis, Josiah Bradlee, and Stephen Fairbanks be a Committee to solicit a copy for publication.

Attest,

EBENEZER WIGHT, *Recording Secretary*.

BOSTON, MAY 20TH, 1845.

HON. GEORGE LUNT,

Dear Sir,

The undersigned have the honor to communicate to you the annexed vote of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, requesting for publication, a copy of your Address, delivered on the evening of the 15th instant.

In the performance of this pleasing duty, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity, to convey to you our personal satisfaction with the excellent and appropriate sentiments so eloquently expressed: and for the honor of the literature of our Country, and the good of the Society, which we represent, we trust you will readily consent to the promulgation of an Address of such rare merit.

We are, with great esteem,

Your friends and obedient servants,

ISAAC P. DAVIS,
JOSIAH BRADLEE, } *Committee.*
STEPHEN FAIRBANKS, }

NEWBURYPORT, MAY 21, 1845.

Gentlemen,—

With a grateful sense of your kind appreciation of my performance, whose merits, whatever they may be, must be attributed to my heartfelt interest in the subject, I have the honor to submit it entirely to your disposal.

I remain, gentlemen,

With great respect,

Truly your friend and servant,

GEORGE LUNT.

I. P. DAVIS,
JOSIAH BRADLEE,
STEPHEN FAIRBANKS, ESQRS.

Wright

A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY :

It is a touching, and to some of you, perhaps, familiar incident related of a celebrated English traveller,* whose genius and misfortunes have long closely allied him with every human sympathy. He was engaged upon his first adventurous enterprise into a distant and unknown land. He had penetrated the interior solitudes of Africa. He was in the midst of the vast deserts of a barbarous clime. He was hundreds of miles away from the very outskirts of civilization, and surrounded on every side by the beasts of the wilderness, and by men scarcely less ferocious. He had suffered every privation and every ill. He was alone in the dismal waste, with a worn and failing body and a sinking mind. It was while the chance of life appeared a thing almost too hopeless for conjecture, and a thousand natural emotions thronged upon his soul ; while the present seemed to crowd into its narrow hour the accumulated memories of all the past, and offered him but the prospect of a miserable death upon the barren sands, for the home which he had left with such eager and buoyant expectations, and the loved and lovely things he was to behold no more ; it was at this moment of despondency and distress, that an object caught his eye,

* Park.

which, perhaps, from the heedless or the happy, would scarcely have attracted a passing glance. It was a small moss, of extraordinary beauty, in the process of germination; and, as he contemplated the delicate conformation of its roots and leaves, the thought forced itself irresistibly upon his mind, that the same bountiful and eternal Providence, which protected this minute but lovely object in obscurity so complete, and in the region of perpetual barrenness, could not be unmindful of one of his intelligent beings, the highest in the order of intellectual creation. It was the reflection thus suggested which banished his despair, and nerved his heart to those renewed efforts which secured his eventual return to his native land.

There could be no more striking illustration than this of the benevolent order of the universe; which so often vindicates itself under circumstances apparently fortuitous, by demonstrating the purpose and value of those things, whose utility a cold philosophy had endeavored to discover in vain. It were, indeed, too much to say, that the minutest atom which floats in infinite space, or the meanest flower that blows upon the bosom of nature, have been created for no valuable end. If the purposes of existence were less than they really are in the eye of reason and enlightened philosophy, we might have been subjected to a very different constitution of external nature. To surround us merely with those things which might minister to our actual necessities, were to deprive our senses themselves of their very noblest attributes, and to contract within the narrowest limits the circle of our capacities and desires. Take from us, indeed, those lovely manifestations of the external world; those sweet, and graceful and glorious things, which tend much more, perhaps, to the promotion of our present happiness, as well as to the perfection of our immortal destiny, than all

which the world counts most worthy of its pursuit,—and our minds were dark, and our hearts dead within us, instead of kindling with the glowing earth, as, radiant with brightness and beauty, she smiles to meet the embraces of the returning Spring.

The very savage, indeed, must derive some moral elevation from the contemplation of external nature. For his untutored soul, as well as for the mind of the most cultivated student of the works of creation, that orient pavilion, flushed with a thousand gorgeous and shifting hues, from out whose dazzling portals issue the outgoings of the morning; the deepened loveliness of that softer heaven, which ushers universal nature to repose; the changing year, as its advancing seasons ripen into mellow beauty;—yes, all and each, within the rudest recesses of the primeval wilderness as well as amidst the refinements of a more polished taste, in their turn have given wing to a sublimer imagination, widened the sphere of intellectual exertion, and dignified the reflections and aspirations of the moral being. The Indian maiden, who decks her jetty tresses with the wild flowers plucked by the margin of the forest brook, drinks in from them the same images of grace, fragility and beauty, which they are fitted to inspire in the proudest bosom that beats in regal halls; where every silken tint that art has curiously embroidered, and every radiant gleam that glitters from clustered gems, were incomplete without these simpler charms, furnished by the cheap provision of nature, yet more resplendent in their freshness than the array of Solomon in all his glory!

But if such be the universal influence of natural beauty; if over even the soul of a barbarian it exerts this inwrought power to charm the imagination and elevate the mind; surely, amidst the hourly cares which, in more

civilized life, press upon the hearts of men, they can find no relief so easily attained, and, at the same time, so refreshing and salutary, as the contemplation of those lovely things, which our common mother, for the common use and entertainment of her children, hangs sparkling with dew-drops upon every tree, or flings with bounteous profusion over her luxuriant bosom.

Whoever enters upon the attentive examination of these objects, in the spirit of rational philosophy, will be certain to attain a reward at least commensurate with his exertions; for if it acquire him no other possession, it will at least bring him that priceless one of an innocent heart and a gentle mind; and a student of nature, who should become sensual and debased, would present as strange an anomaly as an undevout astronomer.

The human mind itself is indeed deeply imbued with the spirit of love for natural beauty. Perhaps there is no one who has so entirely lost the impress originally stamped by the hand of God upon the soul of man,—no one who is so thoroughly “of the earth, earthy,” as to have lost all conscious enjoyment of the glorious creation around him, crowned by every revolving season with its own peculiar magnificence and beauty. Of the tendency of many of the great pursuits of life, when they are modified by no controlling influence, to render us sordid and selfish, there can exist no doubt. The very refinements of existence corrupt as well as polish. The human character insensibly dwindles amidst the pursuits of civilized society. The range of our feelings becomes contracted under the weight of the conventionalisms of life. The sphere of thought itself grows narrower in the plodding routine of daily occupations. Confined amongst the ways and thoroughfares of populous existence, and man becomes almost necessarily assimilated, in thought and

habit, to those with whom he is associated. He conforms, and, perhaps, degrades his being, by conformity with the settled maxims and theories around him; and often,

Like a drop of water,
That in the ocean seeks another drop,—

confounds himself, and loses the identity of his own peculiar, and perhaps nobler characteristics.

Consider, then, the mother of the seasons in some of her infinite manifestations. You wander into the fresh fields and gather the flowers of spring. In crystal vases, resting, it may be, upon sculptured marble, you cherish these frail children of the sun and showers. You renew them before they wither, and gaze with exquisite delight upon their delicate texture and the manifold perfection of their hues. They appeal forever to your inmost heart, as silent mementos of all things sweet, and beautiful, and pure. They are eloquent of perpetual suggestions to the answering soul. They fill your mind more than all that lives upon the canvass of the mightiest master. The least and meanest of them all more satisfies your imagination than the choicest statue wrought by the divinest hand. To your cultivated mind they address themselves in their momentary beauty, like images of things more perfect in immortal loveliness. They are emblems of the affinities of your moral being with whatever is complete in infinite glory beyond the skies. Like the eternal stars, that, on the brow of midnight, assure us, with their unspeakable effulgence, that Heaven and its hopes are yet there, so these, the stars of earth, spring upon her verdant bosom, the mute memorials of an inscrutable immortality. In the humble dwelling-place of the poorest laborer, in some crowded city's dim alley, into which the golden light of day pours scarcely one beam of all his abounding flood, you may often discern some simple flower, which

indicates the longing of our more spiritual being; which recalls to the mind's eye of the wearied man the green fields of his boyish days, and impresses him again and again,—oh, not in vain!—with the gentler and purer emotions of his childhood. They come upon him, amidst the dust and heat, and perhaps the wretchedness, of his daily lot, like outward manifestations of the inner spirit-world. They are the signals of thoughts

Commercing with the skies.

They are like gleams of a fairer and brighter sunshine, from realms “beyond the visible diurnal sphere.”

The time does, indeed, come to all men, when they would gladly escape from the crowd and confusion of common life, and

Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms,

would forget the thronging cares which have exhausted their hearts, in company with *the lilies of the field, that toil not, neither do they spin*. It is, indeed, by influences such as these that we acquire not only fresher impulses to duty, but far higher and nobler principles of action. Experience, it is true, teaches us that the mere drudgery of rural pursuits can have little effect in raising the private or social condition of the man. To turn the verdant soil for the mere sustenance of life, would as little impress his mind with the true sentiment of his occupation, as the gloomy grandeur of ocean enters into the soul of the tempest-tost and weather-worn mariner. The rustic laborer might forever follow his plough upon the mountain side, and trample with heedless foot upon the brightest flowers, that appealed with dewy eyes in vain to his plodding sensibilities; and the village maiden, obeying those truer and nobler instincts, inseparable, I believe, from every

woman's heart, with every returning Spring, might gather and weave them into her rustic coronal. But to fulfil their highest ministry they must have become blended with their kindred associations. They must have linked themselves, as they have done, with the domestic, and public and religious story of the world. Their sweet and gentle names must have floated upon the voice of song. They must have given language of eloquent significance to the passionate impulses of the human heart. They must have spoken of the fragility of life under that sweetest and most soothing of all sad similitudes,—“a fading flower.” They must have crowned the wine-cup amidst the revels of “towered cities,” and mingled with the sunny locks of the queen of May upon the village green. They must have waved upon the brow of the returning victor, wreathed their modest tints amongst the tresses of the blushing bride, and reposed in pale and tranquil beauty upon the marble bosom of death. They must have proved their power to sound the secret well-springs of our hearts, and to draw up the sweeter waters beneath, hidden, as with a veil, by the intertangled sophistications and falsehoods of the world. They must have been won from their wild and unseen solitudes, and nurtured and cherished with a dear and reverent love.

But much as we love to meet them in their green retreats, on the fragrant meadow, by the rural road-side, or in the wild recesses of the rocks, it is as the friends and companions of our daily duties that we most welcome their sweet and holy ministry. Nurtured by our own hands, they become indeed the faithful solace of our cares, and the rich reward of all our pleasant toil. And then how more than strange is this wonderful result with which beneficent Nature repays our fostering charge! What miracle so marvellous, as this mysterious develop-

ment, which we so disregard, because we call it the common course and order of creation ! When the returning season fills our hearts anew with its returning hopes, we take the unsightly and insignificant seed. We bury it out of our sight beneath the dark, insensate earth. The dews and the showers fall upon what might well seem to be its eternal bed. The sun reaches its secret resting place with a vital and incomprehensible energy. It awakens from its slumber, and no apparent elements of its original conformation remain. It starts into being under newer and ever-varying aspects,—till

from the root
Spirits lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More aery, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes.

PAR. LOST.

And then, what human philosophy is competent to explain the unseen cause, which, from elements apparently so inadequate, brings up the slender and tapering stalk, shoots forth the verdant leaf, and embellishes its lustrous crown with inimitable purple, or the flowering gold ! What wonderful chemistry is this, which so filters the moisture of the earth and the dew of heaven, and combines and diffuses the just proportions of the vital air through every intricate fibre, till it blushes in the bloom of the queenly Rose, and makes the virgin Lily the emblem of purity and light ! With what unerring skill they are blended or contrasted in their infinite variety of “quaint enamelled dyes” ! With what exquisite order and precision their gorgeous retinue appears, each at its accustomed season, and gathers the successive harvest of its transient glory !

Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
 Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses,
 That die unmarried ere they can behold
 Bright Phoebus in his strength ; * * *
 * * * bold oxlips, and
 The crown-imperial ; lilies of all kinds,
 The flower-de-luce being one.

WINTER'S TALE.

Of all the gentle and welcome company, not one but lifts its starry cup or hangs its clustering bells upon the spiral stem. And oh, still stranger transformation, when this treasured darling of an hour, so rich in glowing charms and fragrant with delicious sweetness, yields to the immutable law of its destiny ; refolds the vital principle of its being within the shapeless and scentless husk, and flings itself once more to its wonted repose in the embraces of the fulfilling earth !

It were, perhaps, too much to allege that for our use and pleasure alone were created these loveliest objects of the natural world, so curious in contrivance, so matchless in surpassing beauty, so eloquent in the lessons of unerring wisdom. Of the original inevitable relation between things beautiful and things morally good, we may form some not irrational conjecture. That they are sadly disjointed, under our present condition, we well know. But if, as we are told,

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
 Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,— PAR. LOST.

it were not unreasonable to conclude, that, to their celestial apprehension, the lovely aspects of creation may afford a delight commensurate with the primal relations between all things in themselves excellent ; that to them, as to the Infinite Author, the loveliness of creation may seem *very good*. Nor are we capable of understanding how far the inferior orders of being are susceptible of enjoyment from the same sources with ourselves. That their organs are

affected to some extent by the same sights, as well as sounds, which address themselves to our own sensations, and that they do appreciate some of the properties of the vegetable world, we have the most abundant evidence. That the "grazed ox" would trample, in the fragrant meadow, upon the springing blossoms, that fill the soul of the merest child with irrepressible delight, is no less true, than that the bee lingers upon the flowery bank, in pursuit of his sweet repast, or that the wild bird trills his spontaneous song where dews are brightest, amongst leaves and flowers. Yet we may be sure, that to us alone of the common dwellers upon earth is given the power of justly appreciating these munificent gifts of the benevolent Author of all things. To us alone has been afforded the faculty of deriving the most innocent enjoyment from their cultivation and care; and, since the first habitation assigned to our common parents was indeed a Paradise,* we may conclude, that in the indulgence of no other of our pleasures do we so nearly approach their happy and sinless state.

There can be, indeed, scarcely a change more striking than to leave the noisy streets of the "dim and treeless town" for the pleasant garden, stretching away under the broad delicious sunshine, in the bright and open air. Of all the ordinary vicissitudes of life, I am aware of none which involves a revolution so absolute. We quit the sights which offend us at every turn, and enter upon a scene affluent in all things, which please the eye and refresh the imagination. Instead of the tumult and intemperate haste of the crowded haunts of men, we rest with the repose of nature, broken only by murmurs that are delicious, and the warbled music of the skies. For the suffocating steam of crowded life, we inhale ineffable per-

* ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΣΟΣ, a garden.

fumes, that float upon the breath of flowers. We forget the debasing competitions of wealth and fame, and enter into the innocent pursuits of the guileless creatures of the air. Instead of the too often profitless companionships of society, we meet ourselves. We become the companions of our own inner thoughts, and the things which intervene between our hearts and heaven are those which only link us more closely to its infinite aspirations. That voice within speaks to us like a trumpet, whose whis-pers were almost inaudible through the tumult and hurry of life. The heart which was harder than the nether millstone in the cave of Plutus, softens and expands to the just proportions of its nature, beneath the liberal sunshine and under the broad and bounteous atmosphere. And still, like that primal Eden, though shorn and diminished of those heavenly flowers,

That never will in other climate grow,

it is yet the faint image of the original paradise, and the only earthly region instinctive with the spirit of an Almighty and universal Love. It is here, indeed, that

* * o'er the flower

His eye is sparkling and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

A populous solitude of bees and birds
And fairy-form'd and many-colored things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life; the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

BYRON.

It is from places like these that the benefactors of the world have derived the strength of their generous impul-

ses. It is here that statesmen, and poets and philosophers have retired, and moulded those divine conceptions which have resulted in the advancement and elevation of mankind. It was upon such a retreat that that noblest Roman,* styled by one† “the most wise, most worthy, most happy and the greatest of all mankind,” entered after he had made his native city the mistress of the world. In that venerated solitude, to which many a pilgrim step turned in the succeeding ages of his country’s history, wiser than he who, in later times,

Exchanged an empire for a cell,—

he forgot alike his glories and their cares, and conceived that illustrious sentiment, which could never have arisen in an ignoble or ambitious mind, *Nunquam minus solus quàm cum solus*. From the rose-beds of Pæstum, rich in the bloom of their double harvest,‡ was wafted that breath of flowers, which ages ago stirred and mingled with the sublimest of human emotions in “Rome’s least mortal mind:” from that Pæstum, whose fragrant odors yet faint upon the summer gale, amidst the ruins of man’s less durable achievements; that Pæstum, where still

The air is sweet with violets, running wild
Mid broken pieces and fallen capitals;
Sweet as when Tully, writing down his thoughts,
Those thoughts so precious and so lately lost,
(Turning to thee, divine philosophy,
Ever at hand to calm his troubled soul,)
Sailed slowly by two thousand years ago,
For Athens; when a ship, if northeast winds
Blew from the Pæstan gardens, slacked her course. ROGERS.

We have read, with ennobling emotions, in our school-boy days, of the reluctance with which the royal gardener

* Scipio.

† Cowley.

‡ *Biferique rosaria Pæsti.*—VIRG.

of Sidon* left his pleasing toils, for the purpose of assuming the burdensome cares of state. And it was from such a scene that Horace might well have refused to part, to enjoy the more intimate companionship of the master of the world; especially as it must have been alloyed with the society of that proud but degenerate capital, to which Jugurtha, not long before, had bidden farewell in language less flattering than severe: "Farewell, O cruel and venal city, which requirest only a purchaser in order to sell thyself and all which thou dost contain." And it was in the shades of those Salonian gardens, which his own hands had made, that Dioclesian, the emperor, received the ambassadors, who vainly strove to reinvest his brows with

the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king.

But perhaps one of the finest natural illustrations of the interest which still clings to pursuits like these, long after the heart is comparatively dead to all other human cares, is to be found in the pages of the great novelist, whose pictures appear to us less like efforts of imagination, than delineations of nature herself in her invariable aspects. The venerable Abbot of St. Mary's, according to the tenor of the tale, formed apparently for times less troublous than those which then distracted his unhappy country, resigns to a bolder spirit his conspicuous post in the van of the armies of the church, now become literally and carnally militant. He betakes himself, with cheerful resignation, to the horticultural occupations of his earlier and happier days. But his present pursuits and his former condition and character necessarily involve him in the plots and counterplots formed for the liberation of that

* Abdolonymus.

fairest flower of Scotland's beauty, whose uttered name has so long awakened, and will forever awaken, every romantic emotion in the human bosom; of that lovely Mary, less a queen than a woman, whose melancholy story, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, so stirs the heart that all seems harsh and cruel, which sullen history would dare to blend with the memory of her beauty and her wrongs. Yet in spite of her loveliness and misfortunes, the pious and transmuted Abbot, stricken, it is true, somewhat into the vale of years, struggles hard between his allegiance to his queen, consecrated, as it is, by his duty and devotion to the church, and his affection for his garden-plots, which the rude feet of messengers and soldiers might trample; for his fruits and his flowers,—his bergamots, his jessamines and his clove-gilliflowers. Let queens escape from prison, or kingdoms pass away, so the season returns in its freshness to his more intimate domain. "Ay, ruin follows us every where," said he, "a weary life I have had for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing. * * I could be sorry for that poor queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore?—and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort."*

I know, indeed, of no picture more cheering than that of old age, which the world, if it has robbed it of all things else, has been unable to cheat of its relish for these innocent pleasures. There is nothing to rival it, unless it be the unalloyed delight of children in the midst of a garden. How eagerly they scamper along the walks, and stoop over the brightening beds! At the very approach of spring their hearts are bounding as at some unheard-of joy. To them, the golden hours of summer are laden with

* The Abbot, Vol. II.

a rapture unknown to later years. With what exquisite enjoyment they enter upon the minutest examination of the most common things! The flowers that are their own make them rich with an almost untold wealth. The springing grass to them is like the verdure of a fairy creation, and every bud a miracle in their soft and earnest eyes.

And then what a host of illustrious names throng upon our memories, and seem to sanctify these pleasant and quiet scenes. I speak not now so much of the poets, who have been forever the chosen interpreters of nature's mysteries, and wanting whom, she might forever have uttered oracles, sounding to the wise, but vague and indefinite to the general apprehension. But the time would fail me to tell the great and illustrious names of English history, blended with every memory of these endearing pursuits: of Wolsey, magnificent in all his enterprises; of Sidney, conceiving the delicious dreams of "Arcadia," in his ancestral bowers at Penshurst; of Wotton, flattering the Virgin Queen with his present of orange trees from Italy, still flourishing in their original perfection; of Temple, whose heart so clung to the delightful recreations of his leisure hours that he directed, by his will, that heart itself to be buried beneath the sun-dial in his garden; of Evelyn, whose very name awakens every pleasing association connected with rural pursuits, and whose noble sentences are full of the heart and soul of one, who loved the soil that bore him, with every emotion becoming a patriot and a man; of Raleigh, the graceful and gallant, learned and brave; of Bacon, in the language of Cowley,

Whom a wise king and Nature chose
Lord Chancellor of both their laws;

of that Bacon, who would have fresh flowers upon his table

while he sounded the depths of divine and human philosophy ; of Addison, the regenerator of a more manly taste in gardening as well as literature ; of Locke, the child-like philosopher, exchanging his researches amongst the labyrinths of the human mind for studies on a fairer page, the open book of Nature, in her

hues,
Her forms, and in the spirit of her forms,

and who, unlike that illustrious Roman, to whom I have referred, loved the society of children rather than perfect solitude ; of Cowley and Pope, Walpole, Shenstone and Cowper, and a hundred others, who have illustrated this subject by their genius, and who are dear to us by every kindred tie which connects us with the memorials of the mind ; of Newton, conceiving, from a natural phenomenon in his garden, of the mighty law which balances this solid earth amidst the unshaken spheres ; or of Fox, turning without a sigh from that great assembly which he had so often controlled by his sagacious eloquence, and finding amidst his flowers and trees, at St. Anne's Hill, a happiness far more real, than during the long years, when he had been the idol of popular supremacy, or for the brief but dazzling hour, when, having finally grasped the prize of a life-long ambition, he directed the destinies of millions of his fellow men.

And oh, what glory and delight have the poets flung around these delicious resting-places of the soul ! from the time of the wise and royal poet of Israel, who tells us, " I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted in them trees of all kind of fruits ;"* from the father of Grecian minstrelsy, revelling in fancy in the gardens of Alcinous, and the master of the Roman lyre, learned in all the sci-

* Ecclesiastes.

ence of the generous pursuit; from the sylvan shades of Arqua, and every "bosky bourne" which Boccacio so exquisitely delineates, down to the grottoes and flowerbeds of Twickenham, and the almost sacred solitudes of Olney. With what a charm the imagination insensibly clothes the passage of those golden hours,

When Jonson sat in Drummond's classic shade!

What tree of our own planting is more familiar to us than Pope's willow, or Shakspeare's mulberry, set by himself in his garden at New Place? And we have all of us, I trust, devoutly execrated the barbarous hand, which so recently despoiled this tree of trees, which, but for such sacrilege, might have been visited by our children's children. And when we read, in one of the early biographies of Milton, that "a pretty garden-house he took in Aldersgate street, at the end of an entry, and therefore the fitter for his turn, by the reason of the privacy, besides that there were few streets in London more free from noise than that;"* we may well believe that there, rather than in the shock of life, his serene imagination might lavish all its riches amongst the flowery groves of Paradise. Yes! it is the true poets who are with us, not only when the sunshine nestles upon the mossy bank or beds of violets, but who come to us alike when Nature herself is sad and silent, and at the wintry fireside, pour the joy of summer into our longing hearts. It is they who have embroidered the virgin page with inwrought words of every curious hue,—

Of sable grave,
Fresh green, and pleasant yellow, red most brave,
And constant blue, rich purple, guiltless white,
The lowly russet, and the scarlet bright;

* Phillips.

Branched and embroidered like the painted spring ;
 Each leaf match'd with a flower, and each string
 Of golden wire ; * * * *

* * * * There seem to sing the choice
 Birds of a foreign note and various voice ;
 Here hangs a mossy rock ; there plays a fair
 But chiding fountain purl'd ; not the air
 Nor clouds, nor thunder, but are living drawn ;
 Not out of common tiffany or lawn,
 But fine materials which the muses know,
 And only know the countries where they grow.

ATTRIBUTED TO GEORGE CHAPMAN.

Without these glorious hues and forms, indeed, I know not of what materials the literature of a nation could be composed. And thus it is, that from the earliest age, and amongst every people, their beauty and the spirit of their beauty have haunted the soul of song. We know that in all the countries of the East, flowers have forever constituted the symbols of sentiment and affection. The Greeks, who appear to me, by no means, deficient in that element of the romantic which the moderns are so ready to arrogate entirely to themselves, were passionate in their love of flowers. From them have descended to us the custom of their employment in triumphal pageants, and on occasions of joyful or mournful ceremony ; and they had scarcely a familiar flower, of the garden or the field, which their imagination had not woven into some lovely legend, or made the subject of some fanciful metamorphosis. By that most poetical of all people, the Hebrews, they were employed as the vehicles of many a touching and beautiful similitude. Of all the gorgeous company, there are none so familiar to our tongues and hearts, as the two which they have most distinguished with their affectionate admiration. How the spirit of devotion itself appears to spring at the very mention of the familiar names of things so beautiful and pure !

By cool Siloam's shady rill
 How sweet the Lily blows ;
 How sweet the breath, beneath the hill,
 Of Sharon's dewy Rose !

HEBER.

I have thus endeavored, gentlemen, to discourse to you in a manner, let me hope, not entirely inconsistent with the spirit of the occasion. It has been my purpose to avoid that course of technical remark, which, before such an audience, might have proved presumptuous in me rather than instructive to you. That scientific knowledge, which the genius and enterprise of modern times have brought to the pursuit of your liberal objects, may be found in sources easily accessible. Of the dignity and value of these objects it were unnecessary to speak. To apply any elaborate eulogium to this pursuit were as reasonable as to justify the great sun of Heaven himself, in the fullness and glory of his illustrious beams. The beautiful and costly edifice which you have erected is the most fitting testimonial of your liberality, as its purpose affords the surest evidence of a refined and intellectual community. "God Almighty," says Lord Bacon, "first planted a garden ; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures ; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man ; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handy-works ; and a man shall ever see, that, when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely ; as if gardening were the greater perfection."

There can be, indeed, no question whatever that Horticulture, as a scientific pursuit, is of very recent date. The most famous gardens of antiquity, we may be sure, could enter into no sort of comparison with those, which would now be considered as exhibiting the most moderate pretensions, in point of the variety and beauty of their

productions. The hanging gardens of Semiramis have been accounted amongst the wonders of the world. Yet nothing can be more certain than that the "Beauty of the Chaldee's excellency" could afford the royal mistress of Assyria not a single nosegay to be compared with the meanest of those, which constantly grace your elegant and spirited exhibitions. Were it not for the apparent necessity of the case, arising from the absence of intercommunication between different people, it would be unaccountable how little progress was made, for long ages, in an art so eminently attractive in itself, and so universally interesting to mankind. It is true, that conquerors, at all periods of time, have traversed vast portions of the world. But, with the exception of the emperor Napoleon, the pursuits of science, or the advancement of society, have rarely entered into their schemes of personal or national aggrandizement. But what vast improvements in this, as in other respects, have resulted from the extending commerce of the world! Of all the countless profusion of fruits and vegetables which make the fertile face of England "as the garden of the Lord," those indigenious to her soil are of the most insignificant description. Few even of those sweetest flowers, which her later poets have woven into many a golden song, are of her own original production. The oak, and some of the more common forest trees, were all that her Druid groves could boast. The very mulberry of Shakspeare was, in his day, a rare exotic, and one of a large importation procured from the continent by King James, in 1606. And if, as we are told, in the times of Henry VII, apples were sold at one and two shillings each, the red ones bringing the best price, we may conclude, that when Justice Shallow treated Falstaff to a *last year's pippin of his own grafting*, it might be an entertainment, at least, commensurate with the dignity of such a guest.

It has been recently stated, that the average value of the plants in a single horticultural establishment of London, is estimated at a million of dollars. And oh, before this magnificent result had been reached, from the comparatively trifling beginning, of a few centuries ago, what infinite care and cost must have been expended; what love for the generous science must have been fostered and encouraged; what distant and unknown regions had been visited and rifled of the glories of the plains and woods! From solitary Lybian wastes and those paradises of Persia, the Land of Roses, so eloquently described by Xenophon; from

Isles that crown th' Ægean deep,

to the boundless expanse of this bright heritage of ours; from Tartarian deserts to prairies of perpetual bloom; from the fertile breadth of fields, beneath the southern skies, to the strange continents of foreign seas and verdant islands of the ocean,

* * * whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds.

Combined with this adventurous spirit of modern discovery, is another principle, which has proved eminently favorable to the interests of horticultural science. The higher social condition of those softer companions of our garden-walks and labors and gentle cares; the more liberal position awarded them, under the influence of advancing civilization; our deeper interest in their moral and intellectual culture, and our more generous regard for their innocent gratification, have interwoven a thousand graces and refinements, once unknown, amongst the coarser texture of social life. Never, indeed, do they enter so intimately into our joys, and griefs, and affec-

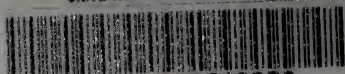
tions, as in gardens and amongst flowers. For them, and not for ourselves, we reclaim the scattered blossoms along the wildernesses of Nature ; we ask of them a more tasteful care in the cultivation of their beauties, and for their pleasure and adornment, we mingle their glorious hues into innumerable shapes of grace and loveliness.

Welcome, then, for this, if for no other cause, the Hall which you have thus prepared, and decorated and garlanded with the choicest treasures of the Spring. Long, long may it stand, an evidence of no vain or idolatrous worship. Unlike those *grosser handiworks* of cold and glittering marble, which crowned, in ancient days, the barren cliff, or looked, in lifeless beauty,

Far out into the melancholy main,—

but touched with the spirit of every gentle and noble association, and consecrated by the soul of all our dearest affections, welcome, to them and to us, be this Temple of the Fruits and Flowers.

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